

REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Water Resources and Policy Chapter

Performance Outcomes and Strategy – Initial Proposal November 2006

DESCRIPTION

The initial performance outcomes and strategy included in this proposal are being put forward for consideration by the Energy and Environment Committee (EEC), at the recommendation of the RCP and Water Policy Task Force. Action by the EEC would direct staff to make technical refinements, and seek input and participation from stakeholders and interested parties. At the conclusion of this public participation phase (approximately 6 months), staff will bring a final proposal to the RCP Task Force as well as the Water Policy Task Force, and subsequently, the EEC and the Regional Council. The purpose of the Chapter is to establish regional goals and an action plan, including performance indicators that will measure progress in the management of water resources within the SCAG Region.

Clean and reliable water in our watersheds is essential to the quality of life in our growing region. The projected growth in population and employment is certain to increase the water challenges the region will face in the coming years. Some of these challenges include the increase of stormwater and urban runoff pollution, limited interagency collaboration and initiatives within shared watershed, the continuing need to import water supplies from watersheds beyond the region, and the shortage of natural spaces within the urban land use plans. In addition, the region has aging water infrastructure systems, uneven water conservation success and a lack of dedicated funding for water projects and operations.

The overall Chapter objective is to encourage the creation and growth of environmentally sustainable communities, in which planning and policies support the sound development and management of water resources and encourage economic vitality throughout the region.

The following are the initial and proposed Chapter Outcomes:

OUTCOME #1: Waterwise Land Use and Local Policies

Description: Local land use policies and practices are established to prevent flooding risks, maximize stormwater capture and minimize water impairments in the SCAG region.

Initial Proposed Quantifiable Outcome¹:

- Increased inclusion of natural areas in land use plans for water infiltration and cleaning
- Increased percolation and stormwater capture for infiltration and reuse

Data Considerations: Local water resources plans

OUTCOME #2: Integration of Water Management Planning Within the Region

Description: Use of integrated water management planning by governments within all watersheds in the region.

Initial Proposed Quantifiable Outcome¹:

- Increased implementation of integrated projects developed through comprehensive watershed management plans
- Increased local government participation in integrated water management plans and projects

Data Considerations: Urban Water Management Plans, Basin Plan (s) Department of Water Resources (DWR), etc.

OUTCOME #3: Water Conservation and Stewardship Throughout the Region

Description: Water conservation policies and stewardship practices are used throughout the SCAG region in order to reduce the waste of potable water and increase reclamation and reuse.

Initial Proposed Quantifiable Outcome¹:

¹ All indicators will be based on current conditions. Current conditions will be based on 2005 data.

- Increased implementation of habitat conservation plans and constructed wetlands
- Increased percolation and stormwater capture for infiltration and reuse
- Increased use of locally-sustainable plantings and landscapes
- Increased use of weather-based (evapotranspiration controlled) irrigation systems in communities
- Increased use of tiered water rates to constrain water use
- Increased implementation of water recycling projects

Data Considerations: City and County Water Conservation Programs/documentation, City and County water resources departments (Public Works), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Regional Water Quality control Board (RWQCB), etc.

OUTCOME #4: Waterwise Transportation Planning Within the Region

Description: Planning, implementation and operation of transportation projects that reduce stormwater risks and polluted runoff. **Initial Proposed Quantifiable Outcome¹:**

- Reduced water impairment listings involving areas with transportation facilities that require pollution control plans (TMDLs)
- Ongoing monitoring of water quality around transportation facilities throughout the region
- Development of standardized mitigation approaches for transportation projects

Data Considerations: City and County water resources departments (Public Works), EPA, RWQCB.

OUTCOME #5: Water Supply Reliability for the Region with New Storage Facilities

Description: Encourage water resources planning that includes new water storage (both surface and groundwater) to mitigate the impacts of climate change and improve water reliability and flood risks.

Initial Proposed Quantifiable Outcome¹:

- Lowered per capita consumption of potable water with increased efficiency and reuse
- Increased water storage capacities with new surface and groundwater reservoirs
- Use of flood control measures in areas with substantial flooding risks
- Increased per capita production of local water supplies within the region

Data Considerations: City and County Governments, General Plans, Basin Plan(s), RWQCB, etc.

STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

Local Land Use Policies

As the SCAG 2% Strategy Plan moves forward, SCAG will work with individual jurisdictions to better link their land use and water resources planning and development. Some of the strategies will include:

- Implementation of open space and green belts within new and infill developments for water cleaning and infiltration
- Implementation of street designs that retain and infiltrate stormwater runoff (City of Downey, Village Homes in Davis, CA are examples)
- Requirements to use native and drought-tolerant landscaping
- Incentives for water retention features such as cisterns and other small systems

Education and Outreach Programs

SCAG will support the development and implementation of public education and outreach efforts at the local level regarding watershed management for community leaders and educators. In addition, SCAG will encourage the implementation of these policies at schools (K-12). The main strategic action will be:

- Implementation of watershed education and outreach programs for community leaders and educators

Water Quality

SCAG staff will encourage and support efforts to improve the water quality in our region's watershed by engaging in the following actions:

- Implementation of integrated watershed management plans and governance
- Issuance of discharge permits on a watershed basis

- Improved coordination of water quality regulations with watershed and community institutions
- Improvement of water quality in the State Water Project
- Reduction of salt levels in the Colorado River Aqueduct supplies
- Implementation of watershed assessments within the region

Water Supply, Reliability and Storage

SCAG staff will encourage water resources planning to include storage and supply, as well as reliability and flood protection. The following actions will contribute to success in this area:

- Increased water conservation and water recycling programs (i.e., desalters)
- Increased use of groundwater storage and the development of new storage capacities. (This could include development and implementation of infiltration, recharge and injection technologies.)
- Increased water storage capacities consistent with regional water reliability

Advanced Water Management Techniques

Water management and technological advances are key components to conserve water and, therefore, be consistent with local planning, such as General Plans. Therefore, SCAG staff encourages the following actions:

- Continuation of ocean desalination research
- Greater use of voluntary water transfers between basins

Water & Energy Relation

SCAG staff will encourage a regionwide water-energy conservation effort in order to achieve incremental energy benefits for water and energy utilities. For this, staff proposes the following action:

- Increased generation of renewable energy supplies in the water system.

Finance Incentives

SCAG will support policies that create incentives for local agencies and other stakeholders to pursue these water management and stewardship objectives.

SUMMARY - DRAFT INDICATORS

As a basis for creating some measurements of progress towards envisioned regional goals or outcomes, staff has identified the following draft indicators:

- Reduced water impairment listings requiring pollution control plans (Total Maximum Daily Loads, or TMDLs)
- Reduced salt and organic pollutant levels in imported water supplies
- Increased implementation of integrated projects developed through watershed management plans
- Ongoing monitoring of water quality throughout the region
- Lowered per capita consumption of potable water with increased efficiency and reuse
- Increased water storage capacities in surface and groundwater reservoirs
- Increased implementation of habitat conservation plans and constructed wetlands
- Increased percolation and stormwater capture for infiltration and reuse
- Reduced use of water for air conditioning coolant
- Increased inclusion of natural areas in land use plans for water infiltration and cleaning
- Increased use of locally-sustainable plantings and landscapes
- Use of flood control measures in areas with substantial flooding risks
- Increased per capita production of local water supplies within the region
- Increased water reclamation and reuse
- Reduced beach closures owing to health risks from polluted runoff
- Increased use of weather-based (evapotranspiration controlled) irrigation systems in communities
- Increased use of tiered water rates to constrain water use
- Local government participation in integrated water management plans and projects